

Democrats widened their majority in Congress, and Sen. Barack Obama was elected president last week, leading many conservatives to speculate how Republicans can get back on track. Considering that Sen. John McCain won Orange County by only a few percentage points and that Obama won Costa Mesa, what'... *Democrats widened their majority in Congress, and Sen. Barack Obama was elected president last week, leading many conservatives to speculate how Republicans can get back on track. Considering that Sen. John McCain won Orange County by only a few percentage points and that Obama won Costa Mesa, what's your prescription for what ails Republicans nationally and locally?*

Just four years ago, Democrats in Washington found themselves "in the wilderness," with Republicans in firm control of Congress and the White House. Now, the shoe is on the other foot. In democracies, the people change their leadership from time to time. It is good that they do so.

So what do Republicans do to turn the tide back the other way? It is instructive to look at what propelled the Democrats to their newfound majorities. I would argue that these include the perilous economic conditions, an unpopular and long war, Republican profligacy in spending, and the number of corruption charges and convictions among members of Congress. It is doubtful that Democratic leaders plotted any of this four years ago. They simply took advantage of the majority party's mistakes and presented plausible alternatives.

I'm not sure that Republicans need to "reinvent" anything. But we do need to actually stand for what we say we stand for. We need to confess the sins of our past and reform them as well. And we need to show new leadership that is articulate, energetic and reasoned.

Democrats have not had this much power since 1994. There is a lot of pent-up demand in their more liberal circle and among their primary constituencies (unions, trial lawyers, etc.) . Some things they will probably handle well. But they will overreach on others, and they will bicker among themselves as all majorities do. When that happens, Republicans must be ready with creative alternatives that are solution-driven rather than ideological.

And then we must actually mean what we say and do what we say.

Rep. John Campbell